

History of Luxemburg Dates Back to Coming of Green Bay Railroad

Wisconsin House Was First Business Place Erected in Village in 1892 as Saloon, Store

LUXEMBURG, Wis.—The history of the Village of Luxemburg, before its incorporation, dates back to the year 1892, the time of the completion of the Kewaunee, Green Bay and Western railroad, and the first regular train was put on in September of that year. Before this time the business center of the community consisted of what is now South Luxemburg, which is not incorporated.

The present depot and freight house was also erected during that year and the first actual business place erected was the Wisconsin House, which was used as a saloon and store by Hector Boncher, but is now a hotel and tavern owned and operated by Camille Barbiaux.

Nick Kaut, Peter Merens, Desire Colle, Mike Ley and Joseph Freix were the leading citizens at that time. A Mr. Paterson was the first railroad agent. Victor Kaye had charge of the Cargill Elevator. Dr. F. Moraux was the first and only physician here for many years. Jule Petry conducted the first lumber yard and shingle mill, and long before prohibition time Casper Loberger operated a cider press. Jos. Roth was proprietor of the first furniture store and Fred Radue operated the first barber shop in a small building in the rear of the Wisconsin House. Vojta Nuhleek was the first harness maker. John Dupont opened up a jewelry store in later years. John Linzmeyer operated the first butcher shop, while Nick Spitzer of South Luxemburg conducted the only hotel for many years and it was his custom to meet all trains. The first postoffice was located in the Linzmeyer building in South Luxemburg up to the year 1903 when the Postoffice Department ordered the change to the village. Albert Liebl through his popularity and accommodating ways has held the position as postmaster for so long that no one remembers the previous incumbent.

First Telephone in 1901

The Bank of Luxemburg was incorporated in 1902. Telephone accommodations were available since July 1901, and the Kaut and Boncher flour mill, now the Luxemburg Milling company, was built in 1903. The American House, a brick hotel, was constructed by Nick Kaut during 1902. In 1893 Peter Boucher constructed the building that houses the Luxemburg News. Desire Colle put up the Kratz saloon in the same year and Mr. Paterson owned and operated what is now part of the A. M. Hoppe & Sons company store, and the building of the Kieweg-Peters company store was started in the spring of 1903.

The first rural mail route out of the village was established in 1904. John L. Miller was the first and for a period of five months the only rural mail carrier. It is related by him, that on July 5th of that year his entire delivery of mail consisted of one post card. Today there are five routes and each carrier delivers approximately five hundred pieces of mail a day.

Peter Merens was the first white child born in what is now the village of Luxemburg. Nick Kaut often mentioned the fact that it took him two days to travel from New Franken to Luxemburg, while it can now be made by auto with ease in fifteen minutes.

Boom Started in 1902

It was in the years of 1902 and 1903 that the real building activities in the village took place and most of the buildings, and more particularly the business places were constructed within the ten years following. It was also at this time that land where the village now stands on was plotted. The west side of the street being owned by Desire Colle was laid out the same way about a year later.

To Nick Kaut goes the honor of being the "Daddy of the Village." It was he who first cleared the forest on which the village now stands, and it was through him and other sturdy Luxemburgers that the name of the village originated from, and it was through his liberal offer that made it possible for many individuals with limited means to purchase lots at a price within their reach.

In disposing of lots he was strict in his demands as regards construction of the buildings thereon and in many instances he practically donated the lots in order to promote some building operations which were for the good of the village. He lived here many years, brought up a fine family, held a number of local offices and was highly respected by all. In later years when he resided elsewhere his greatest pleasure was his semi-annual visits to the village to mingle with old friends, and he would never tire of relating incidents connected with this community. He died thirteen years ago and his body lies in the local cemetery bordering on the village.

School District Formed

Up to 1906 there was no school house in the village and it was at this time that the citizens felt that with the rapidly increasing population a school should be maintained. It was by mutual agreement that a portion of land from Districts No. 3, 5, 7, was released and formed into the present school district comprising the village. The first officers were Charles L. Peters, clerk; Dr. F. Moraux, treasurer; John L. Miller, director. These men were largely responsible for the formation of the new district and it proved very much of an accommodation, and has since developed into a high school with a large attendance. The first term of school was conducted in a room on Main-st., occupied now by the News-Printing company, and E. J. Keilher was the first teacher.

The present opera house was formerly located in what is now known as the Firemen's park, and was municipally-owned. Dances were conducted at regular intervals and the big time of this year was the annual 4th of July celebration with the usual parade, fireworks, etc. Hundreds of people gathered there and the slogan was "The more we spend—the more we make." The profits were used for public improvements. After the building was removed the park's shares were bought up by the village, thanks to the foresightedness of the village officials, and later turned over to the Volunteer Fire department. This place has since developed into a fine recreation park and playground for the children, covering a block square.

Proposal carried 63 to 6 in the meantime the village con-

tinued to grow and demands were being made for street improvements, fire protection, and many other local requirements which could not be handled without some organization, and it was then that the idea was conceived to incorporate the village as a separate unit. Peter Boucher, who afterwards became the first village president, with a number of others, was the prime factor in the preliminary work necessary for the incorporation of the village. Dr. Felix Moraux was also one of the active citizens in promoting the incorporation idea and always took a great deal of interest in all village affairs.

The preliminary meeting to perfect an organization for incorporation was held on Feb. 22, 1908, and the committee appointed to investigate was composed of Dr. Moraux, Peter Boucher, Hector Boncher, John L. Miller and John Panerree. The petitioners who brought this matter before the court were these same men with the addition of Oliver Debauch and Charles L. Peters. John L. Miller was designated to take the census. The election on the 9th day of June, 1908, resulted in a poll of 63 ballots, 53 for the incorporation, 6 against, and 4 defective. This result was recorded in the office of the Secretary of State on June 19 of that year.

Boucher First President

On the 3rd of July the first election for village officers was held and results as follows: Peter Boucher, president; Hector Boncher, supervisor; Fred Lohf, assessor; August Salmon, treasurer; A. J. Villers, clerk; Daniel Daul, Lawrence Rueckl, Louis Liebl, James Sanroch, Peter Merens, Oliver Debauch, trustees; George M. Elfiner, constable; John Radue, marshal. The first meeting of the new board was held on July 6. Shortly after Joseph Goldstein was appointed trustee in place of Peter Merens, who failed to qualify, and Charles F. Teske was appointed as clerk to take the place of A. J. Villers, who resigned.

The first official acts of the new board were to purchase a hand fire pump from the City of Algoma for the sum of \$155, construct two cisterns for fire protection, and purchase land for the construction of the village hall and fire department. In September Hector Boncher succeeded Edward Stika as fire chief. That same month it was voted to have the Village Board Proceedings published in The Luxemburg News, and the custom has been followed ever since, and under the same date, slot machines were prohibited from use by anyone in the village and this ordinance has always been strictly enforced.

On March 21, 1910 the village president's salary was set at \$50.00 per year and has remained at this figure ever since, despite the fact that the duties connected with that office have since increased by leaps and bounds.

In the year 1911 Peter Boucher left the village and his place as president was taken by Charles J. Sell, who served until November, 1912, when he resigned. The Board then appointed Charles L. Peters to fill the unexpired term of president and he has served continually in that capacity to the present time.

Hector Boncher holds even a better record than this, having served continuously as Supervisor since the village was first incorporated. Clem Rass has served as clerk since 1918.

Good Fire Protection

As time went on new equipment was added to the fire department. In addition to the Fairbanks-Morse gas engine stationed at the fire house, which performed good service at many fires, the board purchased a motorized fire truck in 1927. This equipment and the addition of more cisterns in all parts of the village, together with the well organized and efficient volunteer firemen proved to be a valuable asset not only to the village, but also to the surrounding territory, and many thousands of dollars worth of property was saved. It was a custom to make rural fire runs for \$50.00, plus any extra expense, and this amount in most instances the insurance companies were glad to pay.

However, in course of time the popularity of the Luxemburg Fire Department grew to such an extent that calls came from every section and even outside of the county. This naturally increased the fire hazard in the village and in April 1931, a joint meeting was called at which time the Town Boards of Luxemburg, Casco, Montpelier and Red River met with the Board of the Village of Luxemburg to discuss the advisability of purchasing another motorized fire truck to be used for fire protection in these towns and the village only, to be managed and serviced by the village firemen and the expense divided proportionately. This proposition at once met with favor and shortly thereafter a contract was entered for the purchase of an additional pumper of a 300 gallon capacity. The pumper is being housed in the village and has worked out to the mutual benefit of all concerned. The larger pumper owned by the village is not permitted to go outside of the limits and insures good protection at all times.

Kept Pace With Times

Many changes have taken place in the past twenty-five years and all this time the village has kept pace with the times, and today Luxemburg is considered among one of the finest little villages in the state, being located in one of the richest dairy belts. The population of the village is about 500 and consists of a Belgian, German and Bohemian mixture which

LUXEMBURG VIEWS DEPICT PROSPEROUS VILLAGE



CHARLES L. PETERS



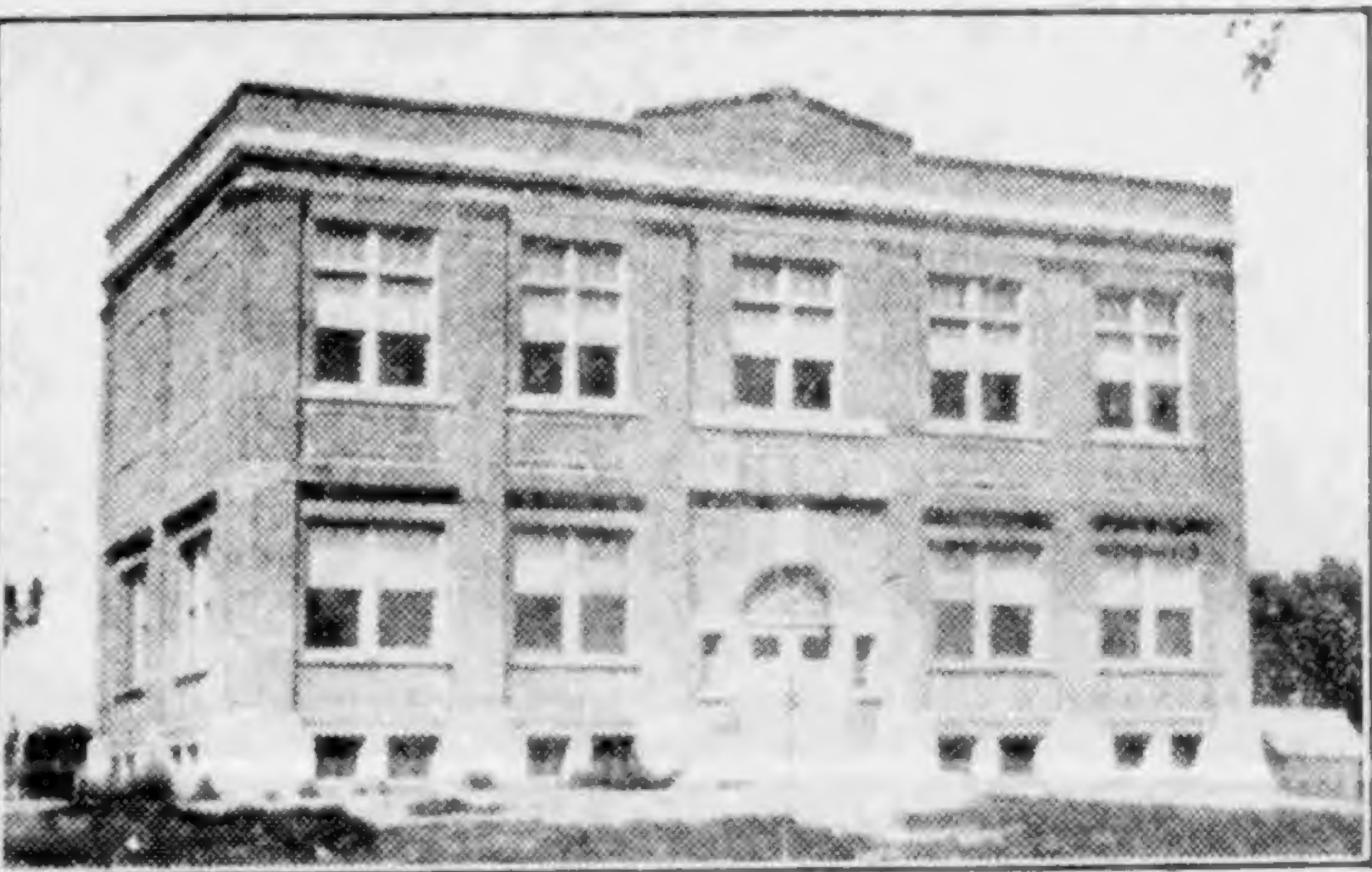
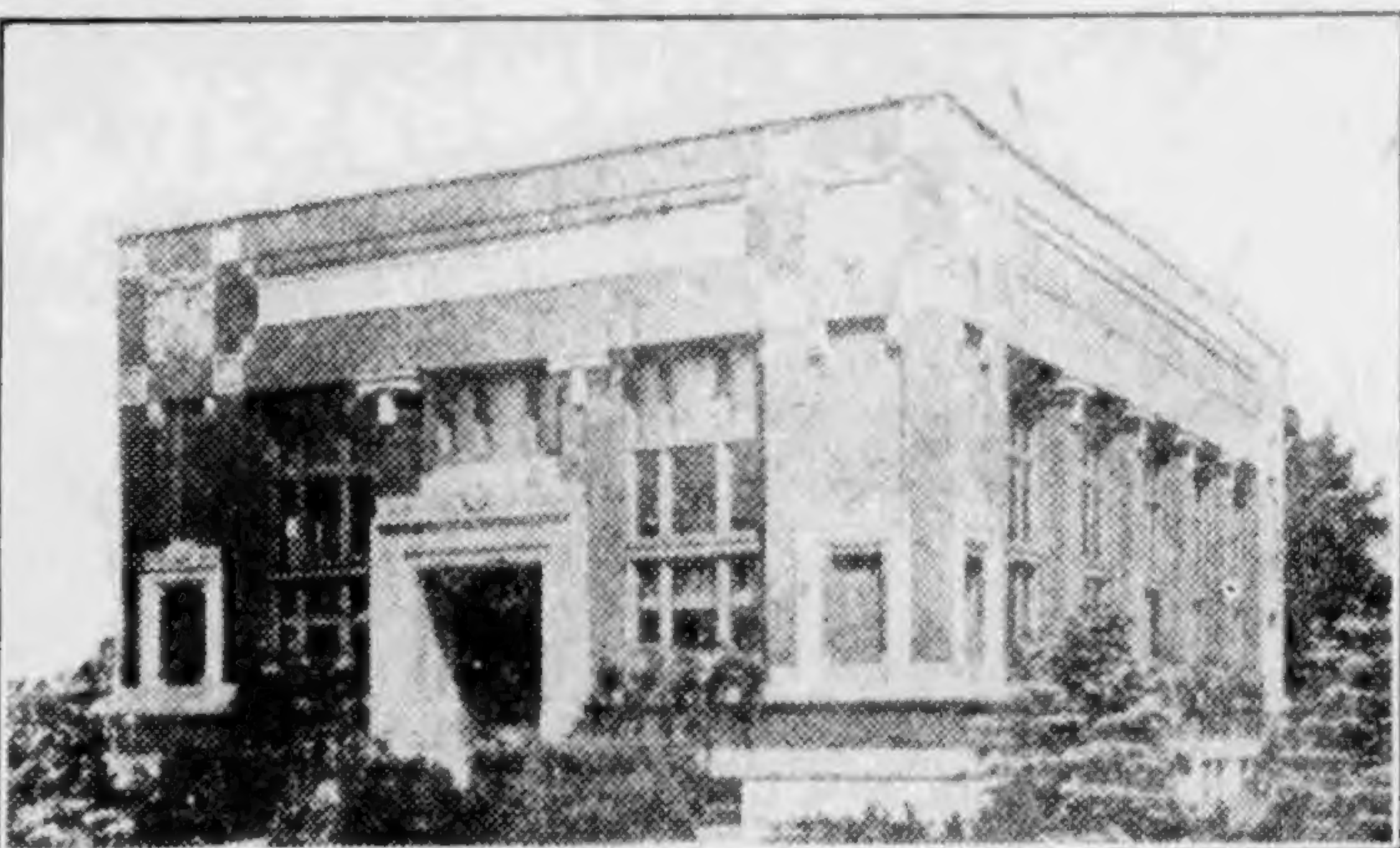
HECTOR BONCHER



PETER BOUCHER



NICHOLAS KAUT



makes it a consistent and energetic populace.

Luxemburg streets are well lighted, the Kewaunee County Fair grounds are situated within its borders, and the success of this institution has brought the village much publicity. August Spitzer is president of this institution and Julius Cahn, secretary, and the results of their efforts have been responsible to a great extent in making this one of the outstanding fairs in the state.

Luxemburg has paved streets, many miles of cement sidewalks, a high school, two parochial schools, two churches, and a weekly newspaper. It also boasts of three large general stores, a variety store, one chain store, two garages, two implement shops, a furniture store and undertaking establishment, a drug store, three grain elevators, opera house, lumber yard, meat market, shoe store, jewelry store, radio shop, sheet metal works, planing mill and cheese box factory, one of the best equipped flour mills in the state, up-to-date bowling alleys, three gas service stations, two barber shops, a telephone exchange. Two doctors, a dentist and a veterinary take care of human and animal ailments. Luxemburg is honored as having one of the finest bank buildings in the state, housing the Bank of Luxemburg which is known as the "Community Bank."

There are two hotels, the village maintains a municipal park, has excellent police protection, and has a modern equipped postoffice.

Dairying is the chief industry in the vicinity, although the land is fertile and crops of all kinds grow in abundance.

Proud of Service Club

This brief history of the Village of Luxemburg would be incomplete if some mention was not made of its service club, deviating from the usual title of such organizations it goes under the name of "The Town and Country Club," the dairy center of Kewaunee county. Its members are composed of a representation from every business house in the village. Regular monthly meetings have been maintained since its organization some twelve years ago, with a large average attendance. Its publicity director is Earl A. Balza, serving on the "dollar-a-year" plan. Outside speakers are procured and this together with local talent adds to the success of these monthly gatherings that are held on the last Thursday of the month.

While the club has not put over any particular large projects directly, it has been instrumental in sponsoring many worthwhile undertakings for the good of the community, and its greatest asset has been its ability to preserve that fine co-operative spirit which is so necessary to the success of any community.

The present officers of the Village of Luxemburg are: President, Charles L. Peters; supervisor, Hector Boncher; trustees, V. J. Laurent, Ralph Colle, Peter Mornard, Frank Hoppe, John Peot and Louis Rueckl, Jr.; clerk, Clem Rass; treasurer, Dr. E. P. Happel; assessor, John Delwiche; justice of the peace, H. A. Peters and Julius Cahn; chief of police, William Martin; police justice, Julius Cahn.

MEMBERS HAILED ORDER KEEPING 32ND DIVISION

How the order rescinding use of the Thirty-second Wisconsin division as a replacement unit was hailed with delight by members of the division, is described in M. M. Quail's "Wisconsin—Its History and Its People." "Many of the men had actually been transferred to other units when the decision taken was rescinded, to the great delight of all members of the division," Quail said. "The successful German offensive begun on March 21, 1918, produced an urgent need for placing as many American troops as possible on the battle line, and under the stress of this situation the plan of utilizing the Thirty-second as a replacement division was abandoned."

FOURTH of July was a great day in Luxemburg as all the residents turned out to join in celebration of national independence day. At the top is a parade, apparently at rest at the end of the march. The event took place in 1894. The town band is seen in the background and the marshal is seated on his horse in the left background. Below it is a view of Main-st., with residents of the village conducting their business in the many flourishing shops. The black object to the upper right of the picture is not a bird's-eye view of a lynching, but a huge pair of overalls advertising a well known product.

A familiar scene during the "boom" days at the storage grounds of the Luxemburg manufacturing company,

dealers in lumber and other building materials (below). The company is a corporation owned by a large group of local residents.

The "city fathers" who look after the interests of Luxemburg are shown in the fourth picture from the top. Seated from left to right are: V. J. Laurent, Peter J. Mornard, Louis Rueckl, Jr., Frank Hoppe and John J. Peot; standing, Julius Cahn, Clem Depas, Harold Peters, William Martin, Clem Rass, Charles L. Peters and Hector Boncher. The village treasurer, Dr. E. P. Happel was out of town when the picture was taken, and John Delwiche, now assessor, has taken the office of Clem Depas.

The Bank of Luxemburg, second from the bottom, was erected in 1916 and served the community around

the village. The grounds are beautifully parked with shrubbery and flowers and the building is a source of pride to its 250 stockholders. Since its organization in 1903, L. Albert Karel has served almost continuously as its president. The lower picture shows Luxemburg's modern high school. At the left are men prominent in the affairs of history of Luxemburg. They are, top, Charles L. Peters, who has been president of the village for 22 years; Hector Boncher, supervisor of the village since its incorporation 26 years ago and one of the village organizers; Peter Boucher, first president of the village and now a resident of Green Bay; Nicholas Kaut, known also as "Daddy" of the village, who cleared most of the land on which the town stands.